



USAID
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AFGHANISTAN

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FACT SHEET

USAID Support to Polio Eradication Activities in Afghanistan

OVERVIEW

Afghanistan is one of four countries with active transmission of the polio virus. Although polio cases decreased after 2001, with only four cases reported in 2004, the deteriorating security situation has been accompanied by a rise in infection. In 2010, officers confirmed 25 polio cases in Afghanistan, most occurring in the southern region. Major challenges in the south, such as safety concerns for vaccinators and monitors, a climate of fear, and frequent population movement between polio-endemic areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan, make accessing and vaccinating at-risk children difficult. Polio eradication efforts in Afghanistan are led by the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) with support from several international partners, including USAID, the Canadian International Development Agency, International Committee of the Red Cross, UNICEF, WHO, the Gates Foundation, and others.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- **Surveillance:** The community based network gathers essential information about polio risk and vaccination, helping to identify needed community interventions and vaccination campaigns
- **Social mobilization and communication:** Support communication through UNICEF, which disseminates polio messages through media, and social mobilizers and communication officers to the communities, focusing on high-risk areas for polio transmission

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Achieved adequate immunity levels in most parts of Afghanistan as indicated by vaccination status reports and other data (84 percent of Afghans live in areas free of circulating polio virus)
- Conduct four national (entire country) and four sub-national (concentrated just on high-risk areas) immunization day rounds per year, in addition to 11 year-round immunization posts on the Pakistan/Afghanistan border to capture children in the considerable volume of cross-border traffic, and periodic short-interval additional doses where needed
- Coordinated with International Security Assistance Force to promote deconfliction in high-risk areas during immunization days to facilitate movement of vaccination teams